

REMARKS

Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration of this application, as amended.

The Examiner's approval of the drawing change proposed on October 28, 2002 is acknowledged with appreciation. A formal drawing, including the proposed correction to Fig. 17, is being submitted herewith under separate cover. Also submitted is a corrected version of Fig. 29 in which the spelling of --rotation-- has been appropriately corrected.

Turning to the claims, independent Claim 1 has been amended more particularly to define the relationship between the concave surfaces of the spacer and the adjacent balls. Dependent Claim 7 has been broadened, and new dependent Claim 11 has been added. A marked-up copy of the amended claims is attached.

As now set forth in Claim 1, each concave surface of the spacer includes a frusto-conical surface portion in line contact with its adjacent ball. Independent Claim 2, which has not been amended herein, recites that each concave surface of at least one spacer has a sectional shape such that the spacer is in substantially circular line contact with the adjacent balls.

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Each of independent Claims 1 and 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Agari '858, the Office having relied specifically on the arrangement shown in Agari's Fig. 5. Insofar as the rejection applies to Claim 1, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration in view of the amendments to Claim 1 herein. As to Claim 2, the rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding Fig. 5 of Agari, it is apparent that, in contrast to Applicants' invention, the concave surfaces of the spacer 50 do not make line contact with balls 7. Rather, gaps 56 are provided between the balls 7 and the adjacent inclined surfaces of retainer portions 55.

Claims 1 and 2 thus clearly distinguish patentably from Agari. Moreover, Kaiser et al. '243, which was cited in connection with several of the dependent claims, fails to overcome the aforementioned deficiency of Agari vis-a-vis Claims 1 and 2.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully submit that this application is in condition for allowance.

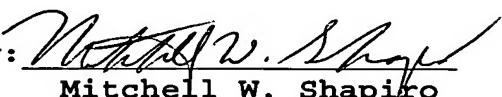
The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge to Deposit Account No. 50-1165 any fees under 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.16 and 1.17 that may be required by this paper and to

credit any overpayment to that Account. If any extension of time is required in connection with the filing of this paper and has not been requested separately, such extension is hereby requested.

Respectfully submitted,

MWS:lmb

Miles & Stockbridge P.C.
1751 Pinnacle Drive
Suite 500
McLean, Virginia 22102
(703) 903-9000

By: 
Mitchell W. Shapiro
Reg. No. 31,568

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Marked-up copy of Claims - 10/038,660

1 1. (Thrice amended) A linear motion device
2 comprising:
3 an outer member;
4 an inner member facing said outer member via a gap;
5 a multiplicity of balls disposed between said outer
6 member and said inner member; and
7 a plurality of spacers;
8 said outer member being linearly moveable relative to
9 said inner member;
10 wherein each spacer is disposed between two adjacent
11 balls and has two concave surfaces facing respectively to
12 said two balls; and
13 [a sectional shape of] each concave surface of at
14 least one spacer [is such that a central portion of said
15 concave surface is rectilinearly connected to an outer edge
16 of the spacer] includes a frusto-conical surface portion in
17 line contact with the adjacent ball.

1 7. (Amended) A linear motion device according to
2 Claim 4,
3 wherein [the] a sectional shape of each concave
4 surface of said at least one spacer includes a central

5 portion substantially perpendicular to a line joining
6 respective centers of the adjacent balls, and a pair of
7 inclined portions extending from opposite ends of the
8 central portion to an axial end [edge] portion of the
9 spacer.